DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 954 UD 030 758

TITLE	Immigrant and Limited English Proficient Youth: Issues in the Great City Schools.
INSTITUTION	Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Sep 95
NOTE	8p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Council of the Great City Schools, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 702, Washington, DC 20004.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
JOURNAL CIT	Urban Indicator; v3 n1 Sep 1995
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; *Cultural Awareness; Disadvantaged Youth; Dropouts; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; *Enrollment Trends; *Immigrants; *Limited English Speaking; Minority Groups; Teacher Education; Urban Areas; Urban Schools; *Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS	*Great Cities Program

ABSTRACT

Trends in the growth of the immigrant student population over the last 10 years are traced, and issues and challenges that such students present for the member cities of the Great City Schools are highlighted. About 9.5 million immigrants, representing almost 60% of the nation's entire immigrant population, entered the United States in the 1980s, with 93% going to metropolitan areas. Almost half lived in the Great Cities of Los Angeles (California), New York (New York), Chicago (Illinois), Washington (District of Columbia), Houston (Texas), and San Francisco (California), and about 15.8% of students in the Great City Schools were of limited English proficiency, compared with 4.9% nationwide in 1992-93. From 1980 to 1992, Great City Schools saw an enrollment increase of 11.5%, while the number of white students declined by 19.7%. Poor academic achievement and high dropout rates accompanied the enrollment increase among students of limited English proficiency. As the total school enrollment is projected to increase, so is the enrollment of immigrant children. Implications of immigration patterns for urban education are traced. Major challenges include the recruitment and training of teachers prepared for cultural diversity and the adaptation of academic content and assessment for limited English proficiency. (Contains 3 graphs, 1 fact sheet, and 10 references.) (SLD)

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Urban Indicator Volume 3, Number 1, September 1995

ED 390 954

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urban Indicator
A Research Publication
Vol. 3, No. 1 September 1995

Immigrant and Limited English Proficient Youth: Issues in the Great City Schools

Since the turn of the century, the largest number of immigrants came to the United States. This population increase affected many of our social institutions, particularly schools. And nowhere were the schools more affected than in the cities.

The purpose of this report is to trace the trends in the growth of immigrant students over the last ten years, and to highlight issues and challenges that immigrant and limited English proficient students present for the Great City Schools (GCS). We will examine national and city demographics, school enrollment patterns, academic performance, issues of linguistic and cultural diversity, and projected trends for the future.

Highlights

- About 9.5 million immigrants entered the United States in the 1980s;
- Some 93% of immigrants resided in metropolitan areas in 1990 while 73% of the general population did;
- Poverty increased among immigrant families by 42% between 1980 and 1990 compared to 11% among the general population;
- Almost half of all recent immigrants into the United States live in the Great Cities of Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Chicago, District of Columbia, Houston and San Francisco;
- The number of Hispanic students enrolled in the GCS increased 48.6% between 1982-83 and 1992-93;
- Some 15.8% of GCS students were limited-English proficient in 1992-93 compared to 4.9% of the general national enrollment;
- Students who have difficulty speaking English are more likely to lag behind their peers in dropout rates and academic achievement; and
- The number of school-aged children of immigrants is expected to rise from 5 million to 9 million between 1990 and 2010.

Immigration and Limited English Proficiency Trends in the Schools: What Is Happening?

National Demographics

- About 9.5 million immigrants entered the United States during the 1980s;

—Almost 60 percent of the nation's entire immigrant population came to this country between 1980 and 1990 (Urban Institute, 1994);

—Almost 1 million more immigrants came to the United States during the 1980s than the 8.9 million who came in the first ten years of this century.

- The total U.S. undocumented alien population is estimated at 3.2 million as of October 1992 (Bean, Edmonston, and Passel, 1990);
- About half the growth in the nation's Hispanic population during the 1980's was due to immigration, as was three-quarters of the growth in the Asian population (Passel and Edmonston, 1992);
- During the 1980s, the countries from which the largest number of U.S. immigrants came include: Mexico (22.6%), the Philippines (7.5%), China (4.7%) Korea (4.5%) and Vietnam(3.8%);
- About 75% of all immigrants coming to the U.S. between 1980 and 1990 settled in six states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois—with 38% settling in California alone (Urban Institute, 1993);

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- About 2 out of 5 (41.0%) recent immigrants (i.e., foreign-born individuals who entered the U.S. between 1980 and 1990) had less than a high school diploma or equivalent when they entered the country (Fix and Passel, 1994);

—Approximately 40% of recent immigrants from Latin America came to the U.S. with less than nine years of education (Fix and Passel, 1994).

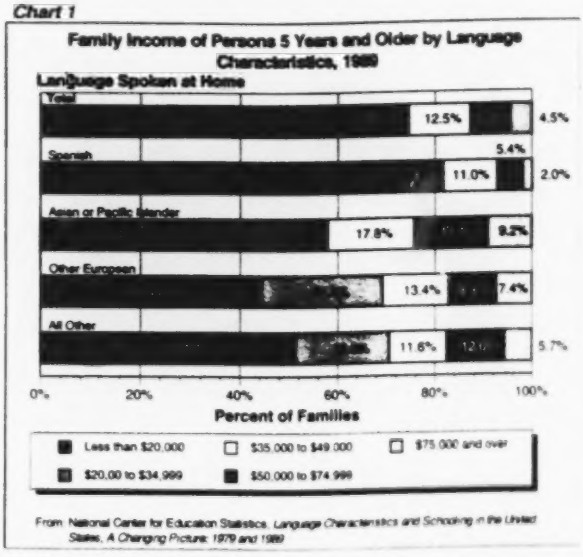
—Approximately 20% of recent immigrants from Europe and Canada came to the U.S. with less than nine years of education (Fix and Passel, 1994).

—Approximately 15% of recent immigrants from Asia came to the U.S. with less than nine years of education (Fix and Passel, 1994).

- The poverty rate of the general population increased by 11% between 1980 and 1990, while the poverty rate of immigrant households increased by 42% (Fix and Passel, 1994);

- Some 50.1% of families who speak a language other than English at home had annual incomes of less than $20,000 in 1989 (Chart 1); and

Chart 1



From National Center for Education Statistics, *Language Characteristics and Schooling in the United States, A Changing Picture: 1979 and 1989*

- The foreign-born population of the U.S. is expected to increase from 8.5% of the total population in 1990 to 12.9% in 2030 (Edmonston and Passel, 1992).

Great City Demographics

- According to the 1990 census, about 93% of recent immigrants reside in metropolitan areas compared to 73% of the general population (Urban Institute, 1993); and

- About 50% of recent immigrants live in the Great Cities of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Diego, Dade County, Houston, Dallas and the District of Columbia—see "Key Facts" on back page (Urban Institute, 1993).

Enrollment Patterns

National

- The total U.S. public school enrollment was 39.8 million in 1980, with whites comprising 73.4% of the total, African Americans 16.1%, Hispanics 8.0%, Asian/Pacific Islanders 1.8% and Native Americans 0.7%; and

- The total U.S. public school enrollment was 42.2 million in 1992, with whites comprising 67.5% of the total, African Americans 16.1%, Hispanics 11.0%, Asian/Pacific Islanders 3.6% and Native Americans 0.9% (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995).

Great City Schools

- The total Great City School enrollment increased from 5.2 million in 1980 to 5.8 million in 1992, an 11.5% gain; and

- Between 1982 to 1992 the number of white students in the Great City Schools declined by 19.7%, while the number of Hispanic students increased by 48.6%.

Limited English Proficiency in the Schools

National

- There were 2.2 million limited English proficient students enrolled in the nation's public schools in 1990-91, up 46.6% or 1.5 million from 1985-86;

- Some 4.9% of all public school children were limited-English proficient in 1992;

- Approximately 43% of all limited-English proficient students in 1990 were immigrants (General Accounting Office, 1994);

- The number of school-aged children (5 to 17 years old) nationally who do not speak English at home increased from 3.8 million in 1979 to 5.2 million in

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1989, a 36.8 % gain (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994);

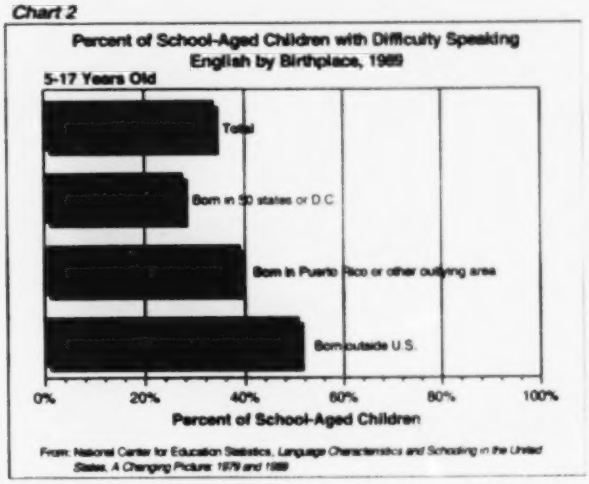
- Over half (52.9%) of all families who speak a language other than English at home were born in the 50 U.S. states or the District of Columbia; while 42.7% were born outside and 4.4% were born in Puerto Rico or the territories; and

- Some 33.7% of school-aged children in 1989 indicated difficulty in speaking English.

—Some 27.5% of school-aged children born in the 50 states or D.C. had difficulty speaking English (Chart 2); while

—Some 50.7% of school-aged children born outside of the 50 states or D.C. had difficulty speaking English (Chart 2).

Chart 2



From: National Center for Education Statistics, *Language Characteristics and Schooling in the United States, A Changing Picture: 1979 and 1989*

Great City Schools

- There were about 790,000 limited English proficient students enrolled in the nation's Great City Schools in 1992, or about 35.9% of the nation's total;

- Some 15.8% of the Great City School enrollment was limited-English proficient in 1992-93, 58.4% were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, 8.7% were disabled, and 31.9% were from families receiving Aid to Families of Dependent Children;

- Students in the Great City Schools speak some 125 languages; and

- Some 64.4% of GCS leaders indicated in 1994 that the education of bilingual and non-English speaking students was one of their top concerns (Ottinger & Root, 1994).

Academic Outcomes

Progress In School

- Some 34.7% of all children (8 to 15 years old) nationally were behind in school in 1989, i.e., were in a grade behind 70% of their age peers—called modal grade[1] (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994);

- Some 37.7% of all limited English proficient children nationally were behind in school in 1989;

- Some 39.9% of children who spoke Spanish at home were behind in school, as were 28.0% of those who spoke Asian/Pacific languages at home, 26.7% who spoke European languages other than English, and 35.2% who spoke all other languages;

- Approximately 42.1% of Spanish speaking children who had difficulty with English were behind in school in 1989, while 32.8% of Asian/Pacific Islander-language speaking children who had difficulty with English were behind in school the same year;

- Some 40.7% of Hispanic children born in the United States were behind in school in 1989, as were 45.3% of those who were born outside of the United States.

Dropout Rates

- The status dropout rate[2] for all youths (16 -24 years old) was 11.0% in 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics, September 1994);

- The status dropout rate for Hispanic youth (16-24 years old) was 29.4% in 1992;

- However, the status dropout rate among Hispanics varied by English speaking ability; for those Hispanic youth who spoke English very well or well the status dropout rate was 16.6% and 30.4% respectively;

- In comparison the status dropout rate for Hispanics who did not speak English well was 61.8% and for those who did not speak English at all the rate was 83.2%; and

- The status dropout rate among non-Hispanics who did not speak English well was 17.0% in 1992.

Postsecondary Enrollment

- About 1 out of 10 (10.4%) recent immigrant youth (16 to 24 years old) were enrolled in college in 1989.

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compared to 23.4% of immigrant youth who entered the U.S. prior to 1980; and

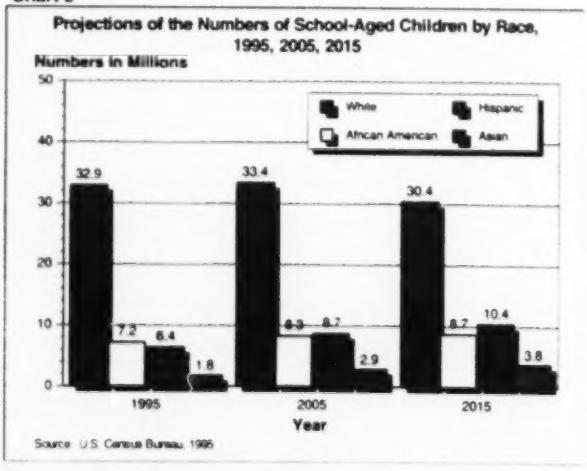
- Recent immigrants who speak Spanish were half as likely to enroll in college than recent immigrants in general (5.4% vs. 10.4%); while recent immigrants who speak languages other than Spanish were almost twice as likely to be enrolled in college (23.4%) than recent immigrants in general.

Future School Trends

National

- The public school enrollment nationally is projected to increase by 15 million students or 33% between 1990 and 2030 (Census, 1994);
- The school aged population (5-14 years in this case) is projected to increase nationally from 34 million in 1990 to 42 million in 2010, or 23.5% (Fix and Passel, 1994);
- The number of children of immigrants (i.e., foreign-born children and native-born children with at least one foreign-born parent) is projected to increase nationally from 5.1 million in 1990 to 9.1 million in 2010 (Passel and Edmonston, 1993);
- The number of U.S. born school-aged white youth is projected to decline nationally by 7.6% between 1995 and 2015, while the number of school-aged Hispanic youth is projected to increase by 62.5% during the same period (Chart 3);
- The percent of school-aged children (6 to 17 years old) living in poverty nationally is projected to grow from 20.6% in 1992 to 29.0% by 2000 (Center on Hunger, Poverty & Nutrition Policy, 1994); and
- The poverty rate for Hispanic school-aged children nationally was 36.5% in 1992 and is expected to reach 40.3% by 2000, while the poverty rate for white school-aged children was 14.2% in 1992 and is expected to reach 15.7% by 2000 (Center on Hunger, Poverty & Nutrition Policy, 1994).

Chart 3



Great City Schools

- Some 85.5% of GCS leaders in 1994 expected an increase in overall urban school enrollment in the next five years;
- More than one-quarter (27.1%) of GCS leaders indicated in 1994 that issues of immigration and bilingual education were critical for the future (Ottinger & Root, 1994);
- The number of school-aged children (6-17 years old) living in central cities is expected to increase from 12.1 million in 1990 to 14.1 million in 2000;
- The number of school-aged children living in poverty in central cities is expected to increase from 29.2% in 1992 to 32.2% in 2000; and
- The poverty rate among Hispanic school-aged children (6-17 years old) in the central cities is expected to increase from 42.1% in 1992 to 47.6 % in 2000, while the poverty rate among African American school-aged children in the central cities is expected to increase from 45.7% in 1992 to 47.8% in 2000 (Center on Hunger, Poverty & Nutrition Policy, 1994).

Implications

Immigration patterns since 1980 will continue to present the nation's schools with significant challenges, particularly in America's Great Cities. The following summarizes some.

The first major challenge will be to have teachers and teacher's aides that reflect the racial, cultural and language diversity of the new students, and who are trained in the problems each brings to school. Some 40.5% of central city schools experience difficulty in hiring bilingual teachers as it is. Second, limited-English language proficiency creates obvious academic barriers for some foreign-born students. The adaptation and implementation of academic content standards, and assessments will be particularly difficult with

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these students, as will remedial instructional strategies. Third, urban schools will be faced more with coordinatiing social and other services for families of immigrant students, and with attracting parents who do not speak English proficiently to attend and participate in school activities, including general language instruction for themselves. Fourth, urban schools will have to meet these challenges with inadequate financing and overcrowded and aging facilities.

Once again, the nation's major urban school systems are on the cusp of a major national challenge. The demographic projections highlighted in this report will only add pressure on school systems currently straining under the weight of the many issues society has asked them to address. The nation, for its part, will need to find more effective ways to support these urban school systems.

Notes

[1]The modal grade is the year of school in which the largest proportion of students of a given age is enrolled.

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The Research Department of the Council of the Great City Schools publishes the *Urban Indicator*, a collection of short analytical papers exploring timely and pertinent issues facing urban education.

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[2]Status dropout rates are the proportion of 16 to 24 year olds who as of October 1, of any given year have not completed high school and are not currently enrolled in school.

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Key Facts

Top Great Cities With Percent of Population Foreign Born, 1990*

City	Percent of Population Foreign Born
✓ Miami, FL (Dade County)	45.1%
✓ Los Angeles, CA	38.4%
✓ San Francisco, CA	34.0%
✓ New York, NY	28.4%
✓ Long Beach, CA	24.3%
✓ San Diego, CA	20.9%
✓ Oakland, CA	19.8%
✓ Newark, NJ	18.7%
✓ Fresno, CA	17.1%
✓ Dallas, TX	12.5%
✓ Washington, DC	9.7%
✓ Phoenix, AZ	8.6%
✓ Houston, TX	5.2%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County and City Data Book, 1994

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